

CLAIMS

1. A computer-aided design (CAD) system for designing an object, comprising:
 - a database for storing data on the shape and/or structure of the object;
 - a data processor for processing input commands for modifying the object and
 - 5 updating the data stored in the database accordingly; and
 - data recordal means for recording the input commands chronologically and storing the record in the database with the object data.
2. A system as claimed in claim 1 further comprising a plurality of remote terminals
- 10 connected via a network to said data base, data processor and data recordal means; said input commands deriving from modifications made at said remote terminals to said object, the object being displayed on said remote terminals.
3. A system as claimed in claim 2 wherein said remote terminals are connected to said server
- 15 via the Internet.
4. A system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said record comprises information on the time and nature of the modification.
- 20 5. A collaborative computer-aided design (CAD) system for designing an object by a plurality of designers working on the design simultaneously, comprising:
 - a server comprising:
 - a database for storing data on the shape and/or structure of the object, and
 - a processor for processing input commands for modifying the object and
 - 25 updating the data stored in the database accordingly; and
 - data recordal means for recording the input commands chronologically and storing the record in the database with the object data; and
 - a plurality of user terminals, each having a screen and a data input means and being connectable to the server via a network;
 - 30 the user terminals being connected to the server such that a representation of the object can be simultaneously displayed on the screens of all user terminals and that modifications can be made to the object by inputting commands via the data input means, the

commands being conveyed via the network and processed via the server processor and recorded by said server data recordal means.

5 6. A system as claimed in claim 5 wherein said user terminals are connected to said server via the Internet.

7. A system as claimed in claim 5 wherein said record comprises information on the time and nature of the modification.

10 8. A system as claimed in claim 2, wherein said record of modifications contains information on the designer making the modification.

9. A system as claimed in claim 2, wherein said record of modifications contains information on the reason for the modification.

15 10. A system as claimed in claim 2, wherein said record of modifications contains information on web sites related to said modification.

20 11. A system as claimed in claim 2, wherein the object is described by data in a format according to a CAD programme and wherein said record is in a format independent of said CAD programme.

25 12. A system as claimed in claim 2, further comprising a plurality of adapters allowing data and input commands originating from different CAD programmes to be input to the system and processed by said data processor independent of the CAD programme.

13. A method of computer aided design of an object comprising:
storing data on the shape and/or structure of the object;
displaying a representation of the object on a screen;
modifying the shape and/or structure of the object by means of input commands to a
5 computer associated with the screen, the input commands being processed to update the data
stored accordingly and an image of the modified object being displayed; and
automatically recording modifications made to the design and storing
information representing the modifications chronologically.
- 10 14. A method as claimed in claim 13, further comprising setting up a collaborative session
between a plurality of users, wherein all users are connected via a network to a server, said
server storing said data and displaying said representation of the object on the screens of the
users, simultaneously, wherein the input commands originate from said users and are
conveyed to said server which processes said commands, updates said stored data, displays
15 the modified object on the screens of the users and records said modifications.
15. A method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the object data is uploaded to said server from
one of said users.
- 20 16. A method as claimed in claim 14, wherein, at the end of said session, said data describing
the modified object, together with the record of modifications made, are downloaded to one
of said users.
- 25 17. A method as claimed in claim 14, wherein, at the end of said session, said data describing
the modified object, together with the record of modifications made, are saved in a design
management file.
- 30 18. A method as claimed in claim 14, wherein, at the end of said session, said data describing
the modified object, together with the record of modifications made, are saved on a floppy or
hard disk.

19. A method as claimed in claim 14, wherein said object data is converted from data described in a format according to a CAD programme used by one of said users, into a format according to a programme used by said server, and said record of modifications is in a format independent of the user format.

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